



## **James Gooch, Antiques Dealer and Owner of Doe & Hope**



Today's interview is with another friend of ours at Studio 73, James Gooch, antique dealer, owner of the ever-impressive Doe & Hope and star of BBC1's The Bidding Room.

Based just outside of Bedford in the charming village of Tempsford, Doe & Hope is well worth a visit. Less than an hour and a half's drive from London,

The Old Forge houses an eclectic mix of unique and unusual antiques. James is the first to admit that his collection isn't going to appeal to everyone but what every piece does do is tell a fascinating story.

**Tell us about your education and how you got to where you are today?**

Originally from Bedford, I went to school here before attending the University of Arts where I studied film for 4 years. I then worked in TV for a few years, namely at the BBC, Endemol and ITV, before joining Lovefilm and Amazon Prime. I loved London whilst I was there but after a while, I needed to escape and so headed back to Bedford. Not quite sure of the next step but knowing I had a keen interest in antiques, I got a job working two days a week for an antiques dealer and rented myself a container at £120/month to start trying my luck at buying and selling a few things myself. Back then, I actually worked in a local pet shop to make up the days in between! Over time, my understanding and knowledge grew and I established Doe & Hope in 2008.

**What inspires you?**

It has to be the journey that objects can tell you. I love the thrill of the chase; buying and selling antiques is essentially gambling. I love beautiful things; I love seeing the beauty in something that someone else can't see and then making them aware of that.

**You must have had some great clients over the years?**

Yes, I have been really lucky. I have worked on some amazing projects with some real characters. I helped the late Keith Flint with his pub in Essex, Stephen Fry is a regular client of mine and Courtney Cox came into the shop and it was only when she bought something that I realised who she was!

**What are some of your most memorable pieces from over the years?**

1. A painting by the famous forger Han van Meegeren who in 1943 one of his forgeries was sold a painting to Hitler's right hand man Hermann Goering, giving van Meegeren the title of 'the man who swindled Goering'.

2. A collection of trap door spiders nests from Ladysmith, Natal; 1897 which still had one old occupant left inside which surprised me to say the least I screamed like a girl.

3. One of my taxidermy marriage creations which I named O'Ruined Harp which was a knackered but very good quality Regency harp mounted with a barn owl – it went to a client in America and I had to send an audible recital of the poem that accompanied the piece lol.

4. A vampire slaying kit which got stopped at customs in America and I had to explain what it was over the phone which was amusing.

## What is your Design philosophy?

If you love something, make it fit in the room. Always buy it and make it work.





